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OLMSTED BROTHERS,  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS.

BROOKLINE, MASS.

22nd July, 1904.

Mr. Charles W. Saunders, President

Board of Park Commissioners, Seattle, Wash.

Dear Sir:-

We are sending you under separate cover by mail  
our preliminary plan No. 2 for Lincoln Park. (NOW BROADWAY P.F.)

In accordance with your instructions, we have devoted  
the greater part of the portion south of the reservoir to  
a rectangular ball field, which we propose to grade to a  
uniform slope rising from south to north at the rate of  
one foot in one hundred. For the sake of symmetry and  
harmony with the reservoir it is to be level from east to  
west. This playfield we propose should be covered with  
turf. To protect such an area in the midst of such a  
dense population from being ruined in appearance by having  
short-cut paths worn across it in various directions, it  
will, in our opinion, be essential to surround it on three  
sides with a fence. This fence we have proposed to make  
as little conspicuous as possible and its ugliness should be concealed  
by means of vines with a little shrubbery at places to  
diversify the rigidity and the lines. We know there will  
be a great deal of opposition both in the Commission and



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out of it to the idea of a fence, but if the Commission will reflect that we are just as anxious as anybody to avoid any arrangement which will be disagreeable and ugly, and if they will realize that the fence itself (though ugly) will not be seen at all when the vines and bushes are grown, but that there will be a varied and interesting irregular mass of foliage with all the delicacy and beauty of the spring and autumn colors on the foliage and the summer flowers and the shrubs, supplemented to any desired extent with perennial and other flowers between the fence and the promenade walk, we hope the Commission will be willing to give the idea a fair trial at least before condemning it. If there is to be no fence, it would be essential in our opinion to neatness that there should be the usual two diagonal walks. This would cut the field into four triangular patches; would lead people into dangerous proximity to the ball playing; would greatly interfere with the free use of the ground by those engaged in games of various sorts, and as presumably shade trees along these walks would be inadmissible, they would be bald and conspicuous and ugly. The foliage covered fence is intended to run around the east, west and south sides of the playfield, leaving the north side all free. The promenade surrounding the playfield is not absolutely essential, but it seems to us it would be very desirable for the accommodation of a large class of visitors who



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will not have occasion to use the playfield, but will desire to stroll about in the shade of ornamental trees for the purpose of enjoying the beauty of the adjoining shrubbery and the views across the playfield. There is intended to be a mass of ornamental shrubbery between this promenade and the outer margin of the park. Where terracing is necessary the shrubbery will cover the terrace slope and mask its rather awkward shape, as it would necessarily begin at nothing at one end and increase gradually to the maximum height at the other. This border shrubbery need not be in general so high as to entirely shut out the view of houses or the views from houses across the park. It is not essential in such a park to secure the same degree of seclusion that would be important in a larger park, and one having landscape treated in a more naturalistic style.

It appears to be absolutely essential for public convenience, especially as one of the approaches to the high school, to have a walk across the park at Olive Street. We have thought it best in this case to have it at the centre of the street. In order to make this walk in harmony with the playfield and with the reservoir, we plan to have it level from east to west, starting at the level of the curb at the west end. This will involve steps at the east end, but the height to be overcome is not excessive. This walk will be shaded by two rows of



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trees, and will have south of it a turf slope about three feet high. In order to afford access to the play-field without the irksomeness of ascending the steps and descending again into the field we have provided a peculiarly crooked walk from the entrance to the base of the terrace. For the sake of symmetry the other end is treated in a similar manner.

North of the Olive Street cross walk we have designed a walk in the form of a semi-circle, because of its usefulness in facilitating short-cutting. This is made to ascend to the grade of the walk around the reservoir. In order to have the semi-circle enclosed by these walks available for certain amusements, we propose to have a terrace of gradually increasing height south of the semi-circular walk.

At the middle of the semi-circle we propose a wading pool. This feature has proved very popular in various parks where we have recommended it, and is not only used for wading, but for sailing toy boats, and in some cases even by very little children as a bathing pool. It is made about 15 inches deep only, the bottom being formed with nice clean sand over a layer of puddled clay. East and west of this wading pool we indicate areas of hard gravel surface, upon which may be disposed seesaws, scups, swings and other apparatus for children's amusements. The



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rest of the semi-circle may be left in turf, so it can be used by the smaller children for lawn games, where they will be free from interference by larger children.

At the centre of the Olive Street walk we have proposed a shelter building, the size of which may be regulated according to the judgment of the Commission as to the amount which can be reasonably expended. It would be our idea to have an enclosed basement affording accommodation for toilet rooms for men and women and a room for a policeman in charge of the grounds, another for a foreman, and another for such workmen as may be employed in addition to the foreman, who may at times be the sole caretaker, also a tool room and storage room, and a room for a heating apparatus, so that the toilet rooms may be used in the winter if desired. In similar buildings that we have designed for some of the Boston parks each of the rooms referred <sup>to</sup> for the various attendants has its own toilet closet. These rooms prove to be extremely useful, especially in case of sudden showers and for the noon hour during very cold or inclement weather, when the men are eating their noon-day meal. It is possible to contract these various accommodations so they will be scarcely more than closets, if thought best. Our idea is that these rooms should be covered over by a flat tar-and-gravel roof and that above this there would be a floor and an open shelter, thus if rain drives into the open shelter,



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there will be no leaks into the rooms below. At the same time the shelter can be arranged with a contrivance of awning curtains or shutters, so that during sudden showers visitors may be protected from rain. This open shelter has proved a very popular feature in small city parks, as women and children like to congregate in such places. Benches are of course provided for their use. As it overlooks the playfield, it forms a good point from which to watch games and in the other direction there will be an interesting outlook upon the children's amusement grounds and a view of the fountain supplying the reservoir. We have suggested on the plan narrow wings, say ten or twelve feet wide only, with a continuous double bench, one side facing toward the playfield, the other toward a row of sand pits. As the latter faces toward the north, it will be a comfortable place for women and larger children in charge of babies to sit and watch them while they are playing in the sand. The sand court should always be open to the sun, but there should be arrangements for stretching an awning when the sun is too powerful.

The other features of the plan will no doubt sufficiently explain themselves. We will only say that we should like to cover the steep slopes, especially those east of the reservoir, with a low verdure which may be of more varied and interesting grasses, vines, perennial flowers, low bushes or else, if desired, a more formal



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display of bedding plants. To secure to the fullest degree the beauty which should be looked for from the kind of plantations we propose, it will be necessary to be unusually liberal with the depth and quantity of topsoil and with fertilizing and cultivation for two or three years at least at the start, but after that the park ought to be maintained, so far as the plantations are concerned at a very trifling expense.

Very truly yours,

*Oliver Brothers*  
*H. B.*